/26 cont./

602 avoids pronouncing the name of his wife. When the wife's father
[606] and mother first visit their son-in-law, he must offer them presents in the same way as when he himself with his wife first visits the wife's parents.

V.

Mourning and Burial of the Dead

758
574 In general the Abkhaz are very compassionate towards the sick and never leave alone a person who is seriously ill. When the villagers are informed that one of their number is seriously ill, all of them without fail will visit him, inquire about his illness, encourage him, and try to cheer him. The patient is visited not only by his relatives, but also by all the other villagers, irrespective of their title or means. They usually come to visit the patient in the evening and spend the whole night with him, singing, dancing, or telling stories, making jokes, etc., with the object of somehow /27/ cheering the invalid and relieving his sufferings in one way or another. The sick are treated with home remedies, old wise-women say prayers over them, etc.

763 As soon as a patient dies, the women instantly break out in deafening wails and soul-shaking screams, at the same time tearing out their hair, scratching their bodies, beating themselves on the face and head, and so on. Meanwhile the whole
764 neighborhood gathers, and the weeping and sobbing increase. Some women closely related to the deceased begin to beat themselves, striking their heads against something or other; the others try to soothe and quiet them. But all these admonitions frequently have no effect on the frenzied mourners, who, as a result of the blows they have inflicted upon their own heads and bodies and of beating their heads against something, fall down as if dead. When quiet finally prevails, the funeral ceremony is arranged. The next of kin sew themselves mourning apparel,
[203] and messengers are sent out with notices and invitations to the relatives, foster parents, friends, and acquaintances of the deceased; his fellow villagers on the other hand are obliged